

Building Prevention-Centered Systems: Key Leadership, Workforce, and Community Roles in Shifting and Sustaining Culture



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Objectives for Today's Session

1. **Define** culture in the context of child welfare.
2. **Recognize** the connection between moving prevention efforts forward and ensuring culture and climate are aligned with agency beliefs and values.
3. **Identify** gaps and apply foundational strategies necessary to lead your organization and community in building a culture and climate that support prevention and collaboration.

Building Prevention-Centered Systems: New York City Administration for Children's Services and Family Enrichment Centers



Emily Lopez

Graham Windham – O.U.R. Place (Organizing to be United and Resilient)

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New York City Administration for Children's Services (ACS)



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ACS Primary Prevention Strategy

1

- Directed at families before they come into care with the system

2

- Less intrusive for children and families

3

- Helpful in reducing the number of child protection investigations of poor black and brown families and the need for secondary interventions

ACS 3-Year Demonstration Project Overview



- ▶ **Background:** ACS launched a 3-year demonstration project consisting of three Family Enrichment Centers (FECs).
- ▶ **FEC Features:** FECs are home-like spaces where neighbors can connect and contribute, find resources and support, and build protective factors to help families thrive.
- ▶ **Planning for Implementation:** The project is led by ACS' Division of Prevention Services with input from a diverse team of community partners and child welfare leaders.



Expert Training on Key Program Areas

**Implementation
Science**

**Appreciative
Inquiry
(Strength-Based
Programming)**

**Parent-Led
Engagement and
Leadership
Development
Processes
(Parent Cafés)**

**Economic
Mobility
(Mobility
Mentoring)**

FECs in New York Communities

Brooklyn

- **East New York: The C.R.I.B.**
(Community Resources in Brooklyn)

Bronx

- **Highbridge: Circle of Dreams**
- **Hunts Point/Longwood: O.U.R Place**
(Organizing to be United and Resilient)

O.U.R. Place: Key Elements

- ▶ Combines primary prevention services designed to reach families proactively
- ▶ Works in partnership with community members through the seven protective factors
- ▶ Is led by families, community members, and partners to drive primary identity
- ▶ Supports children, families, and individuals
- ▶ Applies an equity lens in planning and implementation



Program Evaluation: Preliminary Findings

FECs are having a positive impact on strengthening protective factors:

- ▶ 72% of respondents reported an improvement in their social supports since joining the FEC
- ▶ 61% of respondents reported an improvement in their family functioning
- ▶ 52% of respondents reported an increase in their familial nurturing and attachment
- ▶ 47% of respondents reported an increase in their positive outlook since joining the FEC

Source: Youth Studies Inc. (2020). Summative findings from March 2020 FEC evaluation (Unpublished).



Program Evaluation: Preliminary Findings

Surveyed FEC members reported significant increases in access to advice and resources in addressing several life challenges:

- ▶ Access to advice on financial issues increased by 47%
- ▶ Access to advice on relationships increased by 39%
- ▶ Access to advice on food and nutrition issues increased by 52%
- ▶ Access to advice on managing stress increased by 51%
- ▶ Access to advice on parenting increased by 48%

Source: Youth Studies Inc. (2020). Summative findings from March 2020 FEC evaluation (Unpublished).



Technical Assistance Provided to FECs

**Regular Planning
and Reporting
Meetings**

**Training on
Program
Components**

**Collaboration With
Health and Human
Service Agencies**

**Annual ACS-
Sponsored Events**

**Annual ACS-FEC
Planning Retreats**

Next Steps for FECs

1

- Ensure alignment between FECs and community partnerships.

2

Scale FEC model to provide services and support in more communities.

Building Prevention-Centered Systems: Oklahoma Department of Human Services and the Arnall Family Foundation



Lindsay Laird
Arnall Family Foundation

Deborah Shropshire
Oklahoma Department of Human Services (DHS)



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Child Welfare Leadership and Community Partnerships

Child
welfare
leaders
recognized:

The value of staff that had **relationships with community partners**

A need for community partnerships to be **represented at the executive team level**

A need to **dedicate resources and staff** to building community partnerships

Child Welfare and Arnall Family Foundation Connection

1

•Oklahoma's child welfare system was ripe for partnership.

2

•Shared values supported successful collaboration.

3

The Arnall Family Foundation solidified a partnership with DHS that served as a model for other foundations.

Components of Strong Community Partnerships

**Beginning the
work with shared
values**

**Encouraging
honest
communication**

**Being willing to
share resources
and decision-
making**

**Having the ability
to navigate
difficult situations
together**

Impact Investing in Child Welfare

The Arnall Family Foundation leverages impact investing to accomplish strategic goals.

- ▶ Impact investing is investing with the intention of generating not only a social return but also a financial return.
 - There are several different types of impact investing, including mission-related investments, program-related investments, and social impact bonds (also known as pay-for-success).
- ▶ The benefit of impact investments is that if there is a return, those monies can be reinvested to have an even greater impact.
- ▶ The Arnall Family Foundation and Oklahoma DHS worked to develop a tertiary prevention program.
 - This program is for families whose children are at risk for removal.



Reasons for Investing in “Pay for Success” Program

- 1 •The prevention program was already being independently evaluated.
- 2 •DHS leadership was willing to sign a contract with the Foundation to make success payments.
- 3 Parents are getting the support they need, and their children are safely staying out of foster care.

Additional Community Partnerships in Oklahoma

Spheres of influence in Oklahoma include the faith community and 38 recognized tribal sovereign governments.

- ▶ **Faith Networks:** Connecting with the faith community and faith-based nonprofits was an important strategy for Oklahoma.
- ▶ **Tribes:** Partnership between the state, tribes, and the Court Improvement Program resulted in Oklahoma being awarded the largest federal grant ever issued on improving Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) practice and outcomes for Native children.

Community partnerships are key in successful prevention work.



Building Prevention-Centered Systems in Tribal Nations



Candace Fleming

Quality Improvement Center for Workforce Development

Kimee Wind-Hummingbird

Children and Family Services Administration (CFSA),
Muscogee (Creek) Nation



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Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians' Family Safety Program (FSP)

In 2017, the FSP partnered with the Quality Improvement Center for Workforce Development (QIC-WD) to address child welfare worker retention, which involved examining and interpreting the FSP's:

- ▶ Recruitment, hiring, and retention metrics and processes
- ▶ Organizational culture and climate
- ▶ Other workforce processes and initiatives



Issues Identified During Needs Assessment Process

**Inconsistent
Onboarding
Practices**

**Unclear Job
Expectations**

**Lack of Knowledge
of Culturally
Sensitive Practice**

**Lack of Full
Understanding of
All Agency
Services**

Overview of Onboarding Program

The 5-week onboarding program included:

A structured, interactive review of FSP's policies and procedures

Incorporation of a mock family case to illustrate the full case process for new workers

Inclusion of content related to Cherokee culture and history and culturally-sensitive, trauma-informed practice

Shadowing of all FSP team units to encourage understanding and strengthen relationships across team units

Onboarding Program Components

The onboarding program includes:

- ▶ Manuals for new workers and supervisors to provide guidance
- ▶ Welcome video developed by supervisors
- ▶ Overview of the practice philosophy in the integrated child welfare model and Signs of Safety
- ▶ Cultural video focusing on Cherokee beliefs and history
- ▶ Tour of a Cherokee museum and various villages
- ▶ Opportunities to shadow workers from three units (intake, investigations, and family integrity and preservation)
- ▶ Dedicated time with judicial processes, ICWA, adult social services, and behavioral health services teams



Theory of Change

•Increased
worker
engagement

•Increased
worker
retention

•Increased
effectiveness
of partnering
with families

•Increased
use of
community
services and
family
supports

Overview of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation

Muscogee (Creek) Nation (MCN)

National Complex located in Okmulgee, Oklahoma

Fourth largest Tribe in the Nation, with population of approximately 88,000

Led by Principal Chief, Second Chief, and 16 National Council Representatives

11-County Reservation Area that includes one of the largest counties in Oklahoma

Overview of MCN CFSA Programs

**Family Protection
Team – Child
Protective Services
and Tribal Juvenile
Justice**

**•Tribal Reunification
and Permanency**

**•State Reunification
and Permanency**

**•Certification,
Placement, and
Recruitment of Foster
and Adoptive Homes**

**New Title IV-E
Implementation
Grant Awardee**

MCN CFSA Promoting Safe & Stable Families (PSSF) Program

MCN's PSSF program promotes the Nation's well-being and stability through services focusing on preserving and strengthening Indian families.

- ▶ Families enroll by self-referral, community referral, or, in some cases, other service provider referral.
- ▶ This program is voluntary, and the family must commit to working with PSSF staff.
- ▶ These services are intensive and home based and provide case management to families based on their need.
- ▶ Some of the services include parenting skills, budgeting, transportation, infant massage, and limited financial assistance.



Culture and Climate Support Prevention Efforts

Cultural and climate within CFSA and our Tribal Communities that support prevention efforts:

- ▶ All CFSA staff are indigenous, and most staff live within the reservation boundaries.
- ▶ Staff have more than 250 years of combined experience working in Tribal child welfare or child welfare.
- ▶ Monthly community outreach activities support connection with families, including virtual home visits, food and cleaning supplies delivery, and television commercials.



Fiscal Years 2018–2020

**Engaged with almost
200 families**

**•Provided 640
transports**

**•Completed 1,600
home visits**

**•Led more than 1,400
classes on parenting,
stress management,
and budgeting**

**•Participated in 840
case staffings with
families**

**•Provided \$310,000
in direct assistance**

Building Prevention-Centered Systems: Panel Discussion



Supporting Sustainability of Partnerships in Oklahoma

**Building Strong
Relationships**

**Meeting
Commitments**

**Embracing
Innovation**

**Finding Alignment
in Core Values**

Supporting Sustainability of Partnerships in New York

**Deep Level of Community
Investment by Parent
Leaders**

**Co-designing of Model
With Community**

**Hiring of Staff From the
Community**

Onboarding Program Supports Agency Culture and Climate

1

- Increased trust in the supervisor-worker relationship

2

- Increased knowledge and appreciation for the role every agency unit plays in supporting children and families

3

- Increased comfort in seeking knowledge about Cherokee history and beliefs

Leadership Drivers for Prevention-Focused Child Welfare Systems

**Convening
Workgroup With
Internal and
External
Stakeholders**

**Conducting a
National Scan of
Potential Models**

**Visiting Programs
With Similar
Models**

**Engaging in Weekly
Funding and
Planning
Discussions**

Ongoing Technical Assistance Supports FEC Sustainability

**Regular Planning
and Reporting
Meetings**

**Training on
Program
Components**

**Collaboration With
Health and Human
Service Agencies**

**Annual ACS-
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Lessons Learned in Building Prevention-Focused Child Welfare Systems

1

•Recognize the talent and ability within your team.

2

•Gain team buy-in to initiate a system change.

3

•Attend to historical and personal trauma when examining agency culture and climate.

4

•Conduct a needs assessment to allow workers to directly contribute.

Advice for Leaders Making a Cultural Shift Toward Prevention

- ▶ Commit to adjust the power dynamic that can exist between government and community service providers.
- ▶ Invite community providers to partner and help inform the design of a program model.
- ▶ Ensure that the procurement and contract language clearly describe the new way of working.
- ▶ Get comfortable with the idea of not collecting detailed participant data from the beginning and allow trust to occur on the local level first.



Aligning Resources to Support Innovation

- Recognize that child welfare agencies cannot do this work alone.
- Invest in evidence-informed projects and evaluation to understand impact.
- Understand that partners can provide other positive benefits, including innovation, expertise, and funding.

Aligning Agency Beliefs and Values

**Rely on relationships
within communities to
provide insight into
families.**

**Understand the
community's cultural
values.**

Learn from each family.

How Families Benefit From the Work

- Family voice is amplified.

- Community members identify needs and are the experts.

- Pivot support to address current and specific issues, such as a community organizing series, parent café, and food distribution.

How Families Benefit From the Work

There is a streamlined approach to service delivery.

Staff and families work together.

Families recognize staff from their communities.

Up Next!

Thank you for your participation today!

**Please return to the theater to join us for the Closing Plenary
that will begin at 2:00 p.m. Eastern Time.**

